

OsoSoft's Prompter 1.2

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a tough job at best, but at one time or another, we all have to prepare and give a speech, short talk, or presentation. Aside from the nervousness we all feel about this unfamiliar activity, it's just not something most of us enjoy. But there are ways to make this unpleasant task as easy as possible. *Prompter* is one of those ways.

Using *Prompter* to prepare, rehearse, and print out your speech is part of the answer. The program includes all the tools you need to write a speech and print out hard copies of your talk, for use at the lectern or as handouts. But there's more than that to *Prompter*.

Prompter offers automatic scrolling of your speech, with adjustable font sizes and scrolling rates. You can use this to rehearse your talk as often as you like. There's even a built-in timer which tells you exactly how long your speech will last.

Finally, with any Windows-capable notebook computer, you can display your speech as you give it. It works just like the expensive prompters used by professional public speakers. While giving the speech, using *Prompter* on the dais, you can instantly pause the scrolling, alter the speed with the touch of a key, and move freely around in your text.

If you give more than a couple of talks, speeches, or presentations a year, you can't do without *Prompter*. It will help make you a more effective speaker and dramatically cut down on pre-speech jitters and stage fright.

PROMPTER'S FEATURES

Built-In Speech Editor

Use Any Font

Adjustable Font Size

Adjustable Scroll Rate

Elapsed Time Counter

Maximum Delivery Time for a Single File is One Hour

Delivery Time Display during Editing

Instant Keyboard Control during Prompting.

Fully Paginated Printouts of your Speech

Imports ASCII Files from Other Programs

Easy to Use

Low Cost

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Prompter requires a 386SX or better PC, Windows 3.1 operating in Enhanced Mode, and a minimum of 2 MB of memory. You'll also need 1 MB of disk space for installation, plus a mouse and a valid video display with 640 X 480 resolution minimum.

LICENSE INFORMATION

This is the unregistered version of *Prompter*. *Prompter* is a shareware program. You may try this copy of the program for a period not to exceed 30 days to determine whether or not it is suitable for your needs. After that time, if you continue to use the program, you **must** register your copy with the author. To register, use the **OsoSoft Program Info** command in the **Help** Menu to print the registration form. The Registration fee for this program is \$25. You can also register with a **Visa** or **MasterCard** by calling OsoSoft at (805) 528-1759 during normal West Coast business hours.

Registered users receive the very latest version of the program, a printed manual, additional clip art images, automatic notification of major upgrades, and support. In addition, when you register, you'll always be entitled to upgrade to new registered versions at no charge on the OsoSoft BBS at (805) 528-3753. Registered users are entitled to unlimited free support by telephone, fax, on the OsoSoft BBS, and on CompuServe.

Unregistered users receive only a minimum of support, limited to some installation help, if necessary, and are not entitled to telephone support. If you call the OsoSoft voice number for support as an unregistered user, you will be asked to register at that time by credit card.

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HOURS

OsoSoft business hours are 7 AM to 4 PM, Pacific Time, on weekdays. Calls outside those hours are not appreciated.

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INSTALLATION

The Shareware and Online Update versions of *Prompter* use a manual installation technique. The Full Registered Version includes an automated installation program. To install this program, take the following steps. If you need help with any of the file and directory procedures, consult your Windows or DOS Manual.

1. Copy all files from the distribution diskette or the ZIP file containing the program into a directory on your hard disk. OsoSoft recommends that you create a directory called PROMPTER for the files.

2. VBRUN300.DLL REQUIRED

This program requires that the **VBRUN300.DLL** file, the runtime file for Visual Basic 3.0 programs be installed in your **WINDOWS\SYSTEM** directory. If a copy of that file was not included with this copy of *Prompter*, you may obtain a copy of this file as **VBRUN300.ZIP** on the OsoSoft BBS, at the number below. The file is also available from many other online sources, including CompuServe and America Online.

3. If Windows is not running, start it. Then, from the Program Manager, click once inside the program group where you want the *Prompter* icon. Then, select the **New** command from the Program Manager's **File** menu. Make certain the

Program Item option is selected, then click **OK** or press **<Enter>**.

4. In the **Description** field of the resulting dialog box, type **Prompter**, then press **<Tab>**.

5. In the **Command Line** field, type **C:\PROMPTER\PROMPTER.EXE**, substituting other drive and directory information, if necessary. Press **<Tab>**.

6. In the **Working Directory** field, type **C:\PROMPTER**, or substitute other drive and path information, if necessary.

7. Press **<Enter>** or click **OK** to complete the installation. The *Prompter* icon will appear in the program group you selected earlier.

STARTING PROMPTER

To start *Prompter*, double-click its icon in the *Program Manager*. Once *Prompter* starts, you'll see its main window. The editing and display window for your speech takes up most of the screen. Here is where you'll both create, edit, and display your speech.

At the top of the window are a row of buttons, scroll bars and informational displays, plus a few menu commands. Details on all those commands are in a later section of this manual.

TUTORIAL

Prompter is extremely easy to use, since it has just a few commands. To help you understand how the program works, here's a tutorial giving the steps used to create and deliver a typical speech:

Configuring Prompter

Before creating your first *Prompter* speech, you need to set the program up to match your own personal delivery style. Rates of speech and other elements vary widely from speaker to speaker. To help you with this, *Prompter* includes the text of three speeches, stored in .LEC files in your *Prompter* directory. The first is Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, possibly the most famous speech of all time. There are also two professionally-written radio addresses by President Bill Clinton, which you can also use to help set up *Prompter's* default settings.

Select **FileOpen** from the *Prompter* menu, then choose **CLINTON1.LEC** or one of the other **LEC** files in the file list, then click **[OK]** in the dialog box. *Prompter* will load the speech into the display window. *Prompter* starts with default scroll rates and font sizes, typical of good speech practices.

Next, click the **[Prompt]** button at the upper left of the *Prompter* window. Immediately, you'll see the cursor begin to travel down the screen at the preset pace. Wait for the cursor to move down a few lines, then speak the text aloud starting at the beginning. If you find yourself falling behind the scroll rate or if the screen scrolls too slowly, change the rate by pressing the **Plus (+)** key on your keypad to speed it up or the **Minus (-)** key to slow the rate down. You'll see the change reflected in the Lines per Minute (lpm) number at the top of the window. Experiment with speeds until you find a rate which suits you best.

REMEMBER: Public addresses are normally given at a slower rate than normal conversation. You may feel that you're speaking too slowly, but your rate of delivery should be somewhat slower than normal speech.

At any time during this process, you can pause the scrolling by pressing any alphanumeric key on your keyboard, including the space bar. Scrolling will stop instantly. To resume scrolling, press any key again. While scrolling is paused, you can use any directional key on your keyboard to move the cursor to a new location. While scrolling is on, you can use the same keys to jump in the text. This takes a bit of practice, so experiment with the keys while scrolling.

HINT: <Ctrl>-<Home> and <Ctrl>-<End> move to the top and bottom of the text.

To stop scrolling altogether, click the **[Edit]** button. Scrolling will stop and the font size of the editing menu will decrease to allow for easy text editing. At the same time, disabled menu items will become available again. You can only use *Prompter's* menus during editing, not during scrolling.

Once you've established a scroll rate which seems comfortable, select **OptionsSave Settings as Defaults**. This will make the settings you've found that work for you the normal settings whenever you start *Prompter*. Speed and font size settings are also stored in the program's **LEC** files, created whenever you save a speech file, so each speech can have its own settings. You can change these settings and save new defaults at any time.

Creating a New Speech

If *Prompter* is already running, select the **File/New** command to clear your screen. Otherwise, just start the program to begin writing your speech. In either case, click the **[Edit]** button to enable the program's menus and set the screen's font size to 12 points for editing. While in Edit mode, the screen's font size is always 12 points.

Prompter's editing area works much like any Windows word processor. You just type as you would normally, pressing <Enter> only when you reach the end of a paragraph. Since *Prompter* scrolls during rehearsal or performance, it's best not to leave blank lines between paragraphs. Otherwise, you could find yourself on a blank line with nothing to say. Instead, press <Tab> at the beginning of each

paragraph, unless you want blank lines to serve as natural pauses during presentation.

Remember that you'll be speaking aloud, and allow for natural pauses in your speech. Also, if you'll be asking the audience for questions, add a line of text to your speech, such as "Are there any questions?" Where you expect to make a pause, either insert a blank line or two, or type symbols to prompt you to press a key and pause the scrolling. Try ##### as a pause prompt. It's easy to see, and won't be confused with something you might say accidentally.

Continue writing and editing your speech. You can use the **Copy**, **Cut**, and **Paste** commands in the **Edit** menu, just as you would in your word processor. If text is selected or highlighted during editing new text will replace the selected text.

At any time during writing and editing, click the **Estimate Duration** menu command to see a display of the time required to give the talk at the current scroll rate and font size. You can alter these settings with the scroll bars. *Prompter* can edit up to 32,767 characters, which represents about an hour of speaking time. If your speech will extend beyond that time, create the speech in two parts, breaking it up at the point where you plan a break. Then, when speaking, you can load the second part during the break.

Importing Text from Other Applications

Prompter's editor is capable of creating any speech or address. However, if you prefer, you can write your initial draft for your address in another program, such as a word processor. If you do, save the file as an ASCII or Text file in the other application, then load the file into *Prompter*. If you do this, be sure to save the imported file with a different file name to preserve your *Prompter* settings and changes.

Saving and Printing your Speech

Once your speech is written, and as you make changes, be sure to save it. Give the **FileSave As** command, then supply a file name. It's best to stick to the default **LEC** file extension, since that's the one *Prompter* proposes when you open existing speeches. As with all programs, be sure to save your work as you go to avoid accidentally losing your speech.

NOTE: *Prompter* saves by default in its own program directory. You can save in any other directory, however. When you give the **OptionsSave Settings as Defaults** command, the last path selected for saving becomes the new default.

To print the currently-loaded speech, give the **FilePrint** command. You'll be asked to specify a font size for the printout (the default size is 12-points). If you'll be reading the speech from the printout, select a larger size for easier reading.

Your printout will have a header, showing the filename, the date, and the page number. All formatting and margins are set by *Prompter*.

If you want a more heavily-formatted printout, you can load the ASCII **LEC** files saved in *Prompter* into any word processor for formatting before printing.

Rehearsing a Speech

Once your speech is written, click the **[Prompt]** button. The cursor will jump to the top of the text and begin scrolling at the rate you set previously. An elapsed time counter will appear at the upper left of the window. As the speech scrolls, speak in the same way you will during the actual presentation. As you rehearse, you can control the scrolling speed with the **Plus (+)** and **Minus(-)** keys on your keyboard's numeric keypad. Pause the scrolling at any time by pressing any normal alphanumeric key or the space bar, then resume scrolling by pressing any key again. If you need to edit the speech as you rehearse, just click the **[Edit]** button and make your changes. Be sure to save any changes you've made!

NOTE: Whenever you click the **[Prompt]** button, *Prompter* begins scrolling from the top of the file. If you've paused to do editing, press any key after pressing the **[Prompt]** button, then move to your previous location with the cursor movement keys, then press any key again to continue scrolling.

REHEARSAL HINTS: Be sure and rehearse several times, until you feel completely comfortable with your speech. Pay special attention to pauses, pacing, and the speech's scroll rate. Anticipate points where your audience will applaud or ask questions, marking these spots with a symbolic mark to remind you that you may have to press a key to pause when you actually perform the speech before an audience.

Also, make sure during rehearsal that you're completely comfortable with the controls in *Prompter* if you plan to use it during the actual presentation. Practice pausing and altering scroll rates. The last thing you want is a surprise at the lectern.

REMEMBER: No speech was ever over-rehearsed.

Using Prompter during an Actual Speech

Have you ever noticed how smoothly professional public speakers perform? Did you ever notice the little angled piece of glass at the lectern when professionals speak? That's a prompter, and the speech is being displayed on it as the speaker talks. Similarly, those smooth-talking news announcers are speaking that way because they're reading the text as they speak it from a prompter.

Prompter offers you the same advantage. All you need is a notebook computer which can run Windows. Install *Prompter* on the notebook, just as you did on

your desktop computer. You load the **LEC** file for your speech ahead of time, place the notebook on the lectern, then simply click the **[Prompt]** button when it's time to speak. As you saw during rehearsal, controlling the scroll rate or pausing and restarting the scrolling is simple and doesn't require much attention.

Essentially, you use the program during the speech, just as you did during rehearsal. You'll never lose your notes or get them out of order.

Here are some hints for using *Prompter* at the lectern:

1. Set up ahead of time. Make sure your notebook screen is easy to see on the lectern, and that the angle of the screen and contrast and brightness settings are ideal.
2. When you reach the lectern, return the notebook to the same position and angle, wait for the applause to die down, then click the **[Prompt]** button or press **<Alt>-P** to start scrolling. Wait until the cursor moves down a few lines, then begin giving your talk. Since you've rehearsed it several times, you'll only have to refer to the screen occasionally.
3. If you're getting ahead of the *Prompter* screen, you're probably rushing your speech, a common problem, usually caused by nervousness. Just slow down a bit. Use the down arrow to catch the screen up with you, then slow your pace. Remember that you set a comfortable pace during rehearsal.
4. If you need to change pacing, use the **+** or **-** keys to change the scroll rate.
5. If you're interrupted with questions, just tap any alphanumeric key on the notebook's keyboard to pause the scrolling. When you begin speaking again, tap a key to resume.
6. If you interject an aside during your talk, again, press a key to pause scrolling, then press another to begin scrolling when you resume your prepared text.

NOTE: Always have a printed copy of your speech on hand, at the lectern, just in case something goes wrong with your computer.

Working with an Assistant

Prompter can also be used with an external monitor attached to a laptop. This works well when an assistant is operating *Prompter* as you speak. If you choose this alternative, be sure you have rehearsed with your assistant well in advance, that the assistant is completely familiar with *Prompter's* operation, and that you have a printed copy of the speech on hand, just in case.

Prompter Reference

On-Screen Controls

[Edit] Button—This button returns *Prompter* to editing mode, with the window's font size set at 12 point type. The cursor will remain at the last position it was in if you were in Prompt mode. This button also enables menus and other controls.

Keyboard Shortcut: <Alt>-T

[Prompt] Button—This button begins scrolling the text at the scroll rate set with the lefthand scroll bar. The current scroll rate is displayed in Lines Per Minute (lpm) next to the scroll bar. Scrolling always begins at the beginning of the file.

Keyboard Shortcut: <Alt>-P

[Speed] Scroll Bar—This scroll bar adjusts the scrolling rate in Lines Per Minute (lpm). The current rate is displayed next to the bar. Click the left arrow to slow things down slightly or the right arrow to speed up. To slow down or speed up at larger intervals, click the area between the arrows on the scroll bar and the "thumb" of the scroll bar. For even larger changes, drag the "thumb" to a new location. **Keyboard Shortcut (During Scrolling Only):** + Increases Rate; - Decreases Rate

[Font Size] Scroll Bar—Alters Scroll Mode font size in points. The current font size is displayed next to the bar. Available only in Edit mode. **NOTE:** When you change font sizes, those changes won't show on the screen in Edit mode. To see the effect, click the **[Prompt]** button.

Menu Commands

File Menu

New—Clears the window in preparation for creating a new speech, with confirmation.

Open—Opens an existing **LEC** or other file. Displays a dialog box for selecting a file. By default, *.**LEC** is the file pattern. Type a new pattern to view files with other extensions. Select a file by clicking on the file name in the dialog box. Open the file by clicking **[Open]** or by double-clicking a file name. **NOTE:** You should save all speeches with the **LEC** extension to save time and help identify your files. You may open any ASCII file for viewing or editing in *Prompter*.

NOTE: Maximum file size is 32K. Larger files will be truncated to that length when displayed.

Save As—Lets you save your current project as a **LEC** file. Save As is used in this program to remind you not to overwrite existing files, especially if they are in another file format. If you type just a filename, without an extension, the **LEC** extension will be added. **NOTE:** Once you've saved a file, the Save As command

will automatically propose that file name for saving. To save that file or a new filename typed into the filename box, just click the **[Save]** button.

Print—After asking you for a font size, *Prompter* will then print your text on the current printer. The font used in the printout is the same one which is displayed in the text window. Header lines and page numbers, always in 12-point type are added automatically, and include the filename, date, and page number. Margins are 1", except for the left margin, which is 1.5" to allow easy three-hole punching.

Exit—Exits *Prompter*. Be sure to save your work. If a file is loaded, *Prompter* will ask if you want to save your file before exiting.

Edit Menu

Cut, Copy, Paste—These are the normal Windows editing commands. You can use the menu commands or normal windows shortcut keys. **<Ctrl>-X** cuts, **<Ctrl>-C** copies, and **<Ctrl>-V** pastes selected text.

Find/Find Next—Search for text. All searches are case-insensitive, which means that entering search text as "Bob" will find "bob," "Bob," or "BOB". *Prompter* remembers your last search text, so giving this command again will automatically insert the text for your last search. To search for new text, just type it in. Each time you search, you'll be asked if you want to begin the search from the beginning. Answer **No** to continue a search from the cursor location. **Keyboard Shortcut: <F3>**

Options Menu

Save Settings as Defaults—This command saves the current Font Name, Font Size, Scrolling Speed, and Path information. Whenever you run *Prompter*, it looks for this information and uses it as the default settings. Once you have *Prompter* working the way you like, use this command to save your settings.

Delete Default File—If you change your mind about your default settings, you can give this command to return to the default settings the next time you start *Prompter*.

Choose Font—*Prompter's* default font is Arial, an easy font to read on the screen. This command, however, will let you choose any available font. The font selected here will be use both on the screen and in any printed copies of your speech. A dialog box will appear. Select a font from the list by clicking on it. A sample of the font will appear. To use the font in *Prompter*, click the **[Accept]** button or double-click the font name. To use the default font, press **<Esc>** or click the **[Cancel]** button.

NOTE: Some fonts in the list are not available both on the printer and the screen.

If you click one of those fonts, the sample window will not change, indicating that the font cannot be used. In all cases, however, *Prompter* will revert to a usable font.

TIP: Use caution when choosing fonts. Make certain that the font you select is easily readable on the screen.

Estimate Duration Menu

Click this menu command at any time while editing your speech. *Prompter* will display the time needed to give the speech or lecture at the current font size and scroll speed. Use this command to help you edit your speech to the desired time.

NOTE: This time display does not automatically update. You must click the command each time you want to know the duration. **Shortcut Keystroke:** <Alt>-D

Help Menu

Help with Prompter—Give this command to view a help window. To use the Help system, click on the topic of interest in the right-hand list. The text for that topic will appear at the top of the right-hand window. To return to *Prompter's* main screen, click **Exit** or **Return to Program**. **Shortcut Key:** <F1>

Prompter Keystrokes—For a quick reference to *Prompter's* keystrokes which can be used during scrolling, select this command. **Shortcut Keystroke:** <Ctrl>-K

About Prompter—This command displays a window containing program and version information, along with contact information for Ososoft.

OsoSoft Program Info—This command provides information on other OsoSoft products and includes a fill-in-the-blanks order form for those products. OsoSoft publishes several programs which may interest you. To view information on any of those products, click the **[Info]** button next to that product's name. To order, type in the quantity for each product, then enter your shipping information in the blanks at the bottom of the screen. To print an order form, click the **[Print]** button. To return to *Prompter*, click **[Cancel]**.

Hints for Effective Public Speaking

Effective public speaking is an art. Professional speakers spend a lot of time mastering that art...and it shows. Turning yourself into a pro takes time, practice, and a little luck. If you only rarely speak in public, you probably dread those occasions. With a little preparation, though, and a few hints, like those listed below, speaking in public can be almost a pleasure for both the speaker and the

audience.

Plan Ahead—There are a few public speakers who can ad lib a speech, but they're a rare breed. Unless you know that you can stand up in front of a crowd and speak effectively with little preparation, plan your talk thoroughly in advance. And don't wait until the last minute. If you've been asked to speak, make sure that what you have to say enhances your audience's knowledge and your own reputation.

Write Carefully—What you say in public makes a lasting impression of you on your listeners. Aim for clarity, precision, and interest when writing your speech. Most speakers find that following these three rules make for a good speech: 1. Tell 'em what you're going to say. 2. Tell 'em what you have to say, in detail. 3. Tell 'em what you said.

Keep it Simple—There are major differences between effective written and spoken language. When you're speaking, your audience can't go back and reread your words. Keep sentences short and simple, and avoid obscure words and references.

Use Humor in Moderation—Humor is a good tool for keeping your audience alert and listening, but don't let it interfere with your message. Above all, avoid off-color or ethnic humor. It's always inappropriate.

Rehearse Thoroughly—Once your speech is written, practice it. Even if you're using *Prompter* while delivering your talk, you should be intimately familiar with it beforehand.

Don't Drone—Vary your speech patterns, speaking at different volume levels and speeds where appropriate. If you're making a point in the speech, make it emphatically.

Make Contact with Your Audience—Look at the people you're addressing. With proper rehearsal, you shouldn't have to read your speech. Just as when you're talking to an individual, you'll be more effective if you look your audience in the eye, glancing at the Prompter screen or printed copy only occasionally.

Anticipate Applause, Laughter, and Questions—If your speech is going well, the audience is going to respond with applause, laughter, and questions. That can throw you off your pace if you're unprepared. Watch for applause points as you write the speech. These usually come when you've made a major point or used extra emphasis. Make note of these and be ready to pause. Want applause? Make a strong point, then simply stop talking briefly. The audience will often respond with applause. Questions, however, can come at any time. What works well is to specifically ask for questions at various points during your talk. That helps you control your audience and the flow of your presentation.

Keep it Brief—Everyone has sat in an audience, impatiently waiting while a speaker drones on and on. Even when the topic is interesting, a speech which goes on too long can send any audience off into dreamland. Check to see how much time is allowed for your talk, then use *Prompter's* timing tools to fit your speech into that time. Remember that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, one of the best-known speeches of all time, took less than three minutes to deliver.

Slow Down—It's always tempting to rush through a speech. The desire to "get it over with" can lead to a hurried, ineffective presentation. If you feel that you're speaking too slowly, you're probably going at just about the right pace. *Prompter* can help you keep a solid pace by scrolling your words at the rate you've found to be effective.

Enjoy Yourself—The enjoyment your audience feels is directly proportional to the enjoyment you have in speaking. If you're overly nervous, your audience will be nervous too. Take a little time before beginning your speech to take a few deep breaths, stretch, and anticipate the good job you're going to do. Then step up to the lectern, look the audience straight in the eye, smile, and speak directly to them, just as if you were speaking to your best friend.